GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4412
ANSWERED ON:24.04.2000
DEEP SEA OIL EXPLORATION
DILEEP SANGHANI

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned,` Rs.300 crores ONGC plan for deep-sea oil exploration in Gulf of Kutch` appearing in the Hindustan Times dated March 23, 2000;

(b) if so, the details of drilling depths, risk involved and ultradeep venture;

(c) the number of contracts signed and wells drilled out of the above blocks; and

(d) the reasons for not attending the other blocks?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

(SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR)

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b): Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.(ONGC)has applied for one Petroleum Exploration Licence(PEL) in deep water area o Kutch. The study of the data indicates that many prospects are present in the water depth range between 1500 to 2000 (plus) metres. The drilling depth depends upon the location of the sites for drilling over the identified prospects.

Oil exploration is a risk filled venture. Drilling in deep water requires deep water rigs and other technologies.Keeping the opportunities and the challenges in view, ONGC plans to acquire both 2D and 3D seismic data, the evaluation of which would decide prospects for taking up exploratory drilling including selection of drilling site. ONGC has a deep water rig capable of drilling in water depths of upto 900 metre.

(c)&(d): Seventy two blocks were offered to private (Foreign and Indian) companies for oil exploration in 1991. Contracts were signed for five blocks, of which four blocks have/had participating interest by foreign companies. Five wells were drilled in three signed blocks. The offer of blocks for exploration and exploitation is a continuous process. Since 1991 after the IVth round was announced, four more exploration rounds, one joint venture exploration round and one round under New Exploration Licensing Policy have been announced in which many of the blocks offered under IVth round in 1991 have been re-offered along with new blocks.